

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 H-01 INR-05 L-01 PM-03 PRS-01

SP-02 DODE-00 CIAE-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 EB-03 /042 R

DRAFTED BY ARA/LA/APU:FVORTIZ:PR

APPROVED BY ARA:WROGERS

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R 210136Z DEC 74

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 279733

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, AR

SUBJECT: BUENOS AIRES MFM - DISCUSSION WITH ARGENTINE
AMBASSADOR

1. AT OUR REQUEST AMBASSADOR ORFILA CALLED ON DEPARTMENT (ROGERS) DECEMBER 20 TO DISCUSS BUENOS AIRES MFM AND OTHER TOPICS OF CURRENT INTEREST. ORFILA SAID ON BASIS HIS DECEMBER 19 DINNER CONVERSATION WITH THE SECRETARY WHICH HE HAD REPORTED TO FONMIN VIGNES, HE BELIEVED PREPARATIONS BY TWO GOVERNMENTS FOR MFM WERE MOVING ALONG WELL. ORFILA SAID HE CONSIDERED A PRIOR VISIT TO BUENOS AIRES BY THE SECRETARY (REPORTED SEPT-74) WOULD BE A VERY POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO STRENGTHENING BI-LATERAL RELATIONS AND ASSURING THE SUCCESS OF MFM. ORFILA SAID HOWEVER THAT ARGENTINA WAS OPPOSED TO HAVING THE OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN BUENOS AIRES SINCE THERE WERE NO FEASIBLE DATES THIS COULD BE DONE AND TO TACK SUCH A MEETING ONTO THE END OF THE MFM WOULD DENIGRATE THE OAS.

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2. ROGERS POINTED OUT THAT THE HOLDING

OF TWO MEETINGS INVOLVING FOREIGN MINISTERS SO CLOSE TOGETHER SEEMED ELABORATELY INEFFICIENT. IT WAS POSSIBLE THAT A MEETING IN BUENOS AIRES WITH ALL THE MINISTERS PRESENT EVEN FOR A VERY SHORT TIME WOULD ENHANCE THE OAS MORE THAN A LACK-LUSTER WASHINGTON MEETING. ORFILA AGREED THAT A TANDEM MEETING WAS WORTH CONSIDERING.

3. ORFILA SAID THE MFM GAVE ARGENTINA AN HISTORIC OPPORTUNITY TO CONSOLIDATE THE NEW DIALOGUE, ESTABLISH A LEADERSHIP POSITION IN LATIN AMERICA AND A TRUE PARTNERSHIP WITH THE U.S. HE CONSIDERED CLOSE BILATERAL CONSULTATIONS VERY USEFUL.

4. CUBAN PARTICIPATION AT THE BUENOS AIRES MEETING WAS DISCUSSED. ORFILA WAS GIVEN U.S. THINKING ON THIS ISSUE WHICH IS BEING COMMUNICATED TO VIGNES BY THE SECRETARY. (SEPTTEL FOLLOWS.) ORFILA REPLIED THAT HE KNEW THE U.S. POSITION DEPENDS UPON WHATEVER CONSENSUS IS ATTAINED BUT THIS COULD VERY WELL NOT BE DEVELOPED UNTIL JUST IMMEDIATELY BEFORE THE MEETING. MR. ROGERS POINTED OUT THAT CUBA HAD THE KEY TO THE SOLUTION TO THIS PROBLEM.

5. THERE FOLLOWED A DISCUSSION OF SPECIFIC ITEMS FOR THE AGENDA AND HOW TO APPROACH THEM. ORFILA SAID CUBA AND PANAMA WERE THE TWO SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES AND THAT MULTINATIONAL GUIDELINES AND TRANSFER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY WERE ALSO SURE TO COME BEFORE THE CONFERENCE, ALTHOUGH HE COMPLAINED OF A LACK OF PROGRESS ON THESE MATTERS. AMBASSADOR BOWDLER RECOMMENDED ARGENTINE ASSISTANCE IN ASSURING THAT THESE ITEMS WERE SUFFICIENTLY DEVELOPED FOR PRESENTATION TO THE MINISTERS. ORFILA SAID REFORM OF THE OAS WOULD SURELY BE ANOTHER ITEM ON THE AGENDA. ROGERS OBSERVED THAT IF THE REVISIONS OF THE RIO TREATY WERE COMPLETED IN TIME, THEY COULD BE SIGNED AS THE PROTOCOL OF BUENOS AIRES.

ORFILA SAID SUCH A DEVELOPMENT WOULD HAVE MANY ATTRACTIONS FOR ARGENTINA, AND COULD VERY WELL SAVE THE MEETING AND ASSURE ITS SUCCESS. HE SAID ARGENTINA WAS NOT ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT VENEZUELAN AND MEXICAN PROPOSALS FOR A

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NEW INTER-AMERICAN ORGANIZATION EXCLUDING THE U.S. ROGERS SAID THE U.S. WAS ALSO CONSIDERING A STATEMENT SUGGESTING PATTERNS OF CHANGE FOR THE OAS IF THIS WOULD BE HELPFUL.

6. ORFILA INDICATED DISSATISFACTION WITH THE PRESENT SITUATION CONCERNING THE ELECTION OF A NEW OAS SECRETARY

GENERAL. HE SAID GIVEN THE RULES AND THE CURRENT SITUATION, A STERILE AND DAMAGING STAND-OFF FOR FIVE BALLOTS SEEMED GUARANTEED. HE SPECULATED HOWEVER THAT THE VENEZUELANS COULD EASILY RALLY SUPPORT AND SAID HE DOUBTED THE U.S. COULD REMAIN NEUTRAL FOR VERY MUCH LONGER.

7. ABOVE FYI ONLY. SISCO

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEETING AGENDA, FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETINGS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, AMBASSADORS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 DEC 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: elyme
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974STATE279733
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: FVORTIZ:PR
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740372-0145
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741216/aaaaanrw.tel
Line Count: 123
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: elyme
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 SEP 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <05 SEP 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <19 MAR 2003 by elyme>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BUENOS AIRES MFM - DISCUSSION WITH ARGENTINE AMBASSADOR
TAGS: PFOR, AR, (ORFILA)
To: BUENOS AIRES
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005